



Regular Cycling

Cycling is beneficial and is generally an outdoor event. With modification, Cycling can be beneficial for Soldiers who have stable Upper Body, Lower Body, Back Injuries, Behavioral Health, PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injuries. Your Adaptive Reconditioning Team will screen each Soldier for participation in Cycling.

Event resourced-

Your WTU should have bikes (upright, recumbent and hand cycles) that have been provided. Ride2Recovery, Project HERO, Hope for the Warriors, Wounded Warrior Project, Paralyzed Veterans of America and other local organizations may also assist in obtaining additional bikes or helmets or basic bike repair training. Your Adaptive Reconditioning Team will coordinate.

Recumbent cycling is ideal for Soldiers who have neck or back pain that limits their tolerance to riding on an upright bike. Recumbent bikes are heavier and slower, so generally riders who can ride on an upright bike will prefer to do so. Handcycles are ideal for Soldiers with lower body paralysis, amputation, impairment or poor balance.

Experienced cyclist, Adaptive Reconditioning Team Member and NCO

Equipment needed- bike, helmet, safety flags, Soldier safety belts (reflective PT belt or vest) a maintenance program for the bikes: tools to maintain bike, air pumps, bike tubes and tires

Soldier brings- own bike and helmet if available, cycle shorts, jersey, jackets if available. If not, appropriate clothing and shoes, gloves, and sunglasses, sunscreen. Riders may also want to carry water and energy bars depending on the length of the ride.

Environmental factors- Weather forecasts and radar should be followed closely before the ride. Riding in the rain is less enjoyable and will require that all equipment be thoroughly cleaned and dried afterwards to prevent rust. Winds of more than 30 mph will make riding difficult, and gusty crosswinds can be dangerous.

Organize this event at- On-post: roads with wide shoulders and low traffic- or specific bike trails.

Off-post: Riding routes should be scouted in advance. Ideal roads have a good surface and not a lot of automobile traffic. Busier roads can be used if there is a wide shoulder. Creating a loop that starts and ends at the same place is ideal. Shorter loops may allow for several groups to make multiple loops and meet up with each other along the way. Local cycling shops/clubs can assist in identifying great riding locations in addition to providing information on club rides.

*Costs may be associated

ABSOLUTE contraindications- recent post-operative surgeries or injuries, unregulated seizure disorders

Modifications- cycling is ideal for Soldiers who cannot tolerate the impact of running or have a lower body limb loss. Bikes can also be modified for Soldiers with upper extremity or lower extremity limb loss.

Overweight Soldiers can also benefit from non-impact exercise. Soldiers with significant low back pain or neck pain (Red Spine group) may not tolerate aggressive positions on road bikes. Some of these riders may benefit

from a recumbent bike, handcycle or an adjustment to their handlebar height. Newer riders who are using recumbent or handcycles may fatigue faster and ride at a slower pace than those who are on upright cycles. Some units have adapted by adding push handles to the recumbent and handcycle for an experienced upright biker to assist the Soldier in a recumbent or handcycle when needed. Use Ability Groups as Soldiers may be at different fitness and experience levels. Your Adaptive Reconditioning team will assist the Soldier with modifications.

Associated RISKS- the most significant risk associated with cycling is crashes and falls. To reduce this risk, Soldiers should ride on roads with little traffic, use hand signals, stay to the right of the road, ride with the flow of traffic, wear PPE, and communicate with other riders. Heat and cold injuries are also possible. Bringing plenty of fluids and encouraging drinking will decrease the risk of heat injury. Riders should use sunscreen during hours most likely to cause burning. Warm clothing worn in layers will decrease the risk of cold injury. Remember that the combination of higher speeds with less full-body effort will require more clothing to be worn than during running in comparable weather conditions.

Rides can last 30 minutes to 6 hours. A vehicle to follow for longer rides is preferred if the riders are less experienced. There is no minimum number needed to ride, but groups larger than 20 riders can become difficult to manage and should likely be broken into 2 smaller groups with a staff member in each.

Domains addressed- physical, emotional, social, spiritual, family